

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of the claims will replace the previous version, and the listing of the claims:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An original transport apparatus for transporting originals, comprising:

an original tray for stacking the originals,

feed means disposed adjacent to the original tray for feeding the originals stacked on the original tray one by one to a predetermined feeding position,

transport means disposed adjacent to the feed means for transporting one original from the feeding position to a discharge outlet through a reading position,

a switchback path disposed ~~adjacent to~~ at an upstream side of the discharge outlet in a sheet discharge direction for switching back the one original after passing through the reading position to turn over the same,

a re-feed path disposed adjacent to the switchback path for returning the one original to the feeding position after the one original is switched back in the switchback path,

discharge means disposed at a downstream side of the switchback path for discharging the one original after the one original is read, and

means ~~for~~ to cause overlapping of the one original with a next original after two sides of the one original are read so that the one original after the two sides of the one original are read is sent to the feeding position via the switchback path, is overlapped with the next original to feed the one and next originals in a same direction and to pass through the reading position in an overlapped condition without being read, and is discharged by the discharge means via the discharge outlet.

2. (currently amended) An original transport apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ~~overlap~~ means to cause overlapping overlaps the one original with the next original such that a leading edge of the one original is shifted rearwardly from a leading edge of the next original by a predetermined distance.

3. (original) An original transport apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said discharge means includes a pair of discharge rollers capable of rotating at different speeds for discharging the one original after the two sides are read.

4. (original) An original transport apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said pair of the discharge rollers includes a first discharge roller for contacting the one original after the two sides thereof are read, and a second discharge roller for contacting the next original to be read next, said first discharge roller rotating at a speed higher than that of the second discharge roller in discharging the original.

5. (original) An original transport apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said pair of the discharge rollers rotates in a reverse direction for switching back the next original and for transporting the next original to the reading position after the one original, the two sides of which have been read, passes the pair of the discharge rollers.

6. (original) An original transport apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said discharge means further includes a return prevention lever disposed adjacent to the discharge rollers for stopping the one original so that the one original is not switched back when the discharge rollers rotate in the reverse direction.

7-10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) An image reading apparatus comprising:

transport means for receiving originals one by one, and transporting the originals sequentially to a predetermined reading position,

reading means for reading one original passing through the reading position,

a switchback path for switching back the one original read at the reading position to change a moving direction thereof to turn over the original,

discharge means for discharging the one original after the one original is read, and

control means for controlling the transport means, the reading means and the discharge means such that the one original is circulated twice through the switchback path for reading two sides of the one original by the reading means; the one original is overlapped with a next original after the two sides of the one original are read and the one and next originals in an overlapped condition are transferred to the reading position; and the next original overlapped with the one original is read by the reading means.

12. (original) An image reading apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said control means selects a first control mode in which the one original is circulated twice through the switchback path for reading the two sides of the one original by the reading means, the one original is overlapped with the next original after the two sides of the one original are read and the one and next originals are transferred to the reading position, and the next original overlapped with the one original is read by the reading means; or a

second control mode in which the one original is circulated twice through the switchback path for reading the two sides of the one original by the reading means, and then a next original is transported to the reading position for reading after the one original is turned over and discharged alone.

13. (new) An image reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said next original is read at the reading position when the one and next originals in the overlapped condition pass through the reading position.